

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Previously presented) A method of inhibiting B-cell growth or immunoglobulin production, or both, in a mammal, the method comprising the step of administering to the mammal a therapeutically effective amount of an antibody that specifically binds to a polypeptide consisting of the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

Claims 2 - 6. (Canceled)

7. (Previously presented) A method of treating a B-cell lymphoproliferate disorder in a mammal comprising the step of administering to the mammal a therapeutically effective amount of an antibody that specifically binds to a polypeptide consisting of the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

Claims 8 - 10. (Canceled)

11. (Currently amended) A method of inhibiting B-cell growth or immunoglobulin production, or both, in a mammal, the method comprising the step of administering to the mammal a therapeutically effective amount of an antibody that specifically binds to a B cell maturation protein (BCMA) polypeptide consisting of a sequence selected from the group consisting of:

- a) amino acid residues 1 to 184 of SEQ ID NO:1 ;
- ~~b) an amino acid sequence that binds to BAFF and is at least 95% identical to amino acid residues 1 to 184 of SEQ ID NO:1;~~
- e) b) amino acid residues 1 to 51 of SEQ ID NO:1 ; and
- d) c) amino acid residues 8 to 41 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

12. (Currently amended) A method according to any one of claims ~~1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 17, and 23~~, 1, 7, 11, 23, and 29-31, wherein the antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

Claims 13 - 21. (Canceled)

22. (Currently amended) The method of any one of claims ~~1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 17, and 23~~, 1, 7, 11, 23, and 29-31, wherein the mammal is human.

23. (Previously presented) A method of inhibiting B-cell growth or immunoglobulin production, or both, in a mammal, the method comprising the step of administering to the mammal a therapeutically effective amount of an antibody that is immunospecific to an antigenic determinant of a polypeptide consisting of the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

24. (Currently amended) The method of any one of claims ~~1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 17, and 23~~, 1, 7, 11, 23, and 29-31, wherein the antibody is recombinantly produced.

25. (Currently amended) The method of any one of claims ~~1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 17, and 23~~, 1, 7, 11, 23, and 29-31, wherein the antibody is humanized.

26. (Currently amended) The method of any one of claims ~~1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 17, and 23~~, 1, 7, 11, 23, and 29-31, wherein the antibody is chimeric.

27. (Currently amended) The method of any one of claims ~~1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 17, and 23~~, 1, 7, 11, 23, and 29-31, wherein the antibody comprises human constant domains.

28. (Currently amended) The method of any one of claims ~~1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 17, and 23~~, 1, 7, 11, 23, and 29-31, wherein the antibody comprises a F(ab')₂ fragment.

29. (Previously presented) A method of inhibiting B-cell growth or immunoglobulin production, or both, in a mammal, the method comprising the step of administering to the mammal a therapeutically effective amount of an antibody that specifically binds to a polypeptide consisting of amino acids 1 to 51 of SEQ ID NO:1.

30. (Previously presented) A method of inhibiting B-cell growth or immunoglobulin production, or both, in a mammal, the method comprising the step of administering to the mammal a therapeutically effective amount of an antibody that specifically binds to a polypeptide consisting of amino acids 8 to 41 of SEQ ID NO:1.

31. (New) A method of treating systemic lupus erythematosus in a mammal comprising the step of administering to the mammal a therapeutically effective amount of an antibody that specifically binds to a polypeptide consisting of the sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

32. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the mammal has an autoimmune disease.

33. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the mammal has hypertension.

34. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the mammal has a renal disorder.

35. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the mammal has inflammation.